



THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PARMA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Prot. No. 111/2020 L

DECREE

In the Name of the Lord. Amen.

After prayerful reflection and consultation with the College of Consultors and other faithful of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma, I, Bishop Milan Lach, S.J., decree, effective 1 October 2020, the Feast of the Protection of the Holy Mother of God, the completion of the dispensation granted 31 March 2020 (protocol number 41/2020 L) and extended on 12 May 2020 (protocol number 64/2020 L) in which the faithful of the eparchy were dispensed from the obligation of attending Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. The termination of the decree is made out of pastoral concern for the souls entrusted to my spiritual care.

Our faith teaches us through the Catechism of the Catholic Church that “The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, public, and regular worship ‘as a sign of his universal beneficence to all.’ Sunday worship fulfills the moral command of the Old Covenant, taking up its rhythm and spirit in the weekly celebration of the Creator and Redeemer of his people (2176). The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church (2177).”

The obligation to participate in the Divine Liturgy is of a serious nature. Failure to observe this precept is objectively sinful. Watching the Divine Liturgy via livestream does not fulfill the obligation.

The elderly and others at increased risk for severe illness and those who care for them, as has been the practice prior to the current health crisis, are not held to the obligation of Sunday worship and are encouraged to use discretion and good judgment in attending Divine Liturgy as well as other activities in which their health or safety may be at risk.

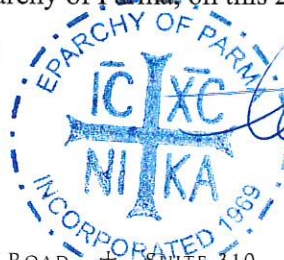
For those not at increased risk of severe illness, the Church has long recognized circumstances in which the faithful may be excused from the obligation of Sunday worship even without a dispensation from the bishop. For example, during a normal influenza season, one who is ill with influenza-like symptoms may, in good conscience, refrain from attending Divine Liturgy due to illness and also as an act of justice towards others in order that the illness is not passed on.

If one wishes to avoid attending Sunday worship in person due to significant fear or some other serious reason, the Church teaches us that we must carefully discern whether the fear is morally justifiable, or whether such fear is inordinate (not reasonable) and, therefore, not based on a prudent examination of reality.

As shepherd and spiritual father, my primary concern is for the eternal salvation of the faithful entrusted to my care. I invite all to join me in praying for the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos for guidance and protection in the months ahead, that we might all be entrusted to the protection of her holy veil.

Given at the Chancery of the Eparchy of Parma, on this 21st day of September, 2020.

Most Reverend Milan Lach, S.J.
Bishop of the Eparchy of Parma



Notary